

BLM NEWS



NEW MEXICO OKLAHOMA TEXAS KANSAS

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BLM Publishes Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the Federal Helium Program

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the *Federal Register* to solicit comments and suggestions to assist in the writing of its regulations governing the Federal Helium Program.

The proposed rule would establish regulations that ensure proper management of the recovery, transportation, storage, disposal and reporting programs of the Nation's helium reserves. The proposed rule would also revise and extend existing regulations for helium on Federal lands and for in-kind helium sales.

"The proposed rule would help the BLM manage the Federal Helium Program and fulfill the requirements of the Helium Privatization Act of 1996," said New Mexico State BLM Director Michelle Chávez. "The BLM encourages public comment during this process," Chávez added. The BLM's New Mexico State Office oversees the field office in Amarillo, Texas, thus has primary administrative responsibilities for the Federal Helium Program.

The BLM will hold five public meetings throughout the United States to encourage public participation in the BLM's development of the proposed rule. The locations are as follow:

- January 8, 2001, BLM Amarillo Field Office, 801 S. Fillmore, Room 447, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Amarillo, TX;
- January 10, 2001, Crowne Plaza (near Galleria), 2222 W. Loop South, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Houston, TX;
- January 17, 2001, Doubletree Lloyd Center, 1000 NE Multnomah, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Portland, OR;
- January 23, 2001, Marriott Denver Airport at Gateway Park, 16455 E. 40th Circle, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Aurora, CO;
- January 25, 2001, Capital Hilton, 16th and K Street, NW, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Washington, D.C.

For those unable to attend a public meeting but wishing to submit written comments, the BLM will consider comments received or postmarked on or before March 26, 2001. Comments may be hand-delivered to the BLM, Administrative Record, Room 401, 1620 L St., NW, Washington, DC, or mailed to the Bureau of Land Management, Administrative Record, Room 401 LS, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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Comments may also be transmitted electronically via the Internet to WOCComment@blm.gov, Attn: AD-35. Comments will be available for review at the L Street address during regular business hours from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To learn more about the Federal Helium Program, visit www.nm.blm.gov.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land - - 264 million surface acres - - than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, which has a budget of \$1.2 billion and a workforce of about 9,000 employees, also administers more than 560 million acres of subsurface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM preserves open space by managing the public lands for multiple uses, including outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, and mining and by conserving natural, historical, cultural and other resources found on the public lands.

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